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So, to be fair, we are sending 13 issues to all charter subscribers--that is, 6 1/2 months of getting the important passenger train news first for one dollar.

* * *

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But most of all, you will have the important, fresh news about your favorite mode of travel all together in one plac twice a month. The address to write is: Message Media, Dept. RTN, P. O. Box 9007, Berkeley, Calif. 94709, U.S.A.

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To:

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RAIL TRAVEL NEWSLETTER

Vol 1 - #2

needed

Canada-Mexico

EXPRESS

DECEMBER 21, 1970

EDITORIAL

LAST CALL FOR PASSENGER TRAINS

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Thus many of our readers have already written to Washington or will be doing so by Christmas at the latest (only 2 working days remain between Christmas and the Dec.29 deadline). The need to indicate to the planners of Railpax that the public needs and wants a more extensive passenger train system than the skeleton network proposed (see our last issue and news items on the following pages for details) is obvious. Newspaper editorials throughout the nation have criticized the meager system. The Calif. Public Utilities Commission, among others, is requesting additional service on the West Coast; but they can only respond to demand from the public, the potential users of the Railpax trains.

(Continued on page 11)

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The largest criticism, however, was that Washington is killing off passenger service altogether by proposing a system so meager that it will be unattractive to potential patrons, and requiring that Railpax turn a profit in a few years or face further cuts--a task deemed very difficult in inflationary times (airlines are starting to show mammoth losses and the Interstate highway system exists only with massive Federal funding).

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Nationwide Rail Strike Lasts One Day

At 12:01 A.M. Dec.10 the Brotherhood of Railway Clerks went on strike after rejecting a 37% raise. President Nixon went to Congress to request legislation halting the walkout, and Congress quickly voted a 13½% retroactive raise and required work to continue until March 1 while negotiations go on. The bill was signed at 3:17 A.M. and trains did not get rolling until Dec.11. All U.S. lines were affected except the Federally-owned Alaska Railroad and the Long Island Railroad.

Commuter snarls were widespread. In N.Y. 230,000 commuters were affected. Chicago was prepared with full-page newspaper maps and instructions Dec. 10 showing how to commute in the event of a strike. San Francisco Bay Area traffic was extraordinarily heavy, with 12,000 commuters who ride S.P. taking to the freeways, and truck shipments much heavier than normal due to curtailed rail freight movement.

Cartoonist Herblock commented on the strike by picturing two commuters waiting beside empty tracks with one remarking "How can you tell when they've resumed what they call service?"

Senators Blast the ICC

A bipartisan group of thirty senators Dec. 7 sent the Interstate Commerce Commission a letter sharply critical of its policies, charging it has plunged the country into a rail crisis. Mike Mansfield is the leader of the group, and is pushing a bill to abolish the ICC and give its functions over to the Department of Transportation. Among the ICC actions criticized were cutbacks in passenger service, mergers, approval of rate increases, and general rubber-stamping of railroad requests.

A congressional investigation of the ICC in 1971 was called for. The ICC recently has been the target of many complaints, prominent among them Ralph Nader's book, "The Interstate Commerce Ommission."

Flying Scotsman to Attempt Tour Again

Alan Pegler's famous train will be sent West next October for an exhibit during British Week. This year's tour of the country was cut short when S.P. refused to permit the train to run on its tracks. Pegler now reportedly has found a route via Burlington Northern, reaching San Francisco by Western Pacific tracks into Oakland, with a ferry ride across the bay to S.F. The train is now in winter storage in Toronto.

Penn Central Threatens to Close Down

The bankrupt PC is pushing Congress to loan it $100 million to continue operations. The bill is now stalled in Congress. PC claims it will shut down operations Jan. 4 unless the money is made available, since it will run out of cash at that time. The recently approved wage increase for Railway Clerks has aggravated PC's financial condition, according to the railroad.

Meanwhile, PC stockholders are calling upon the Federal government to nationalize the railroad.

Employees Want to Buy Railroad.

The Chicago and North Western Railroad may be purchased by a group of its employees, calling themselves the North Western Employees Transportation Corp. The ICC is delaying action on the request, calling it "unique in railroad history." The group wants waiver of an ICC hearing. Union Pacific is opposing the purhcase plan, and the Illinois attorney general wants an inquiry.

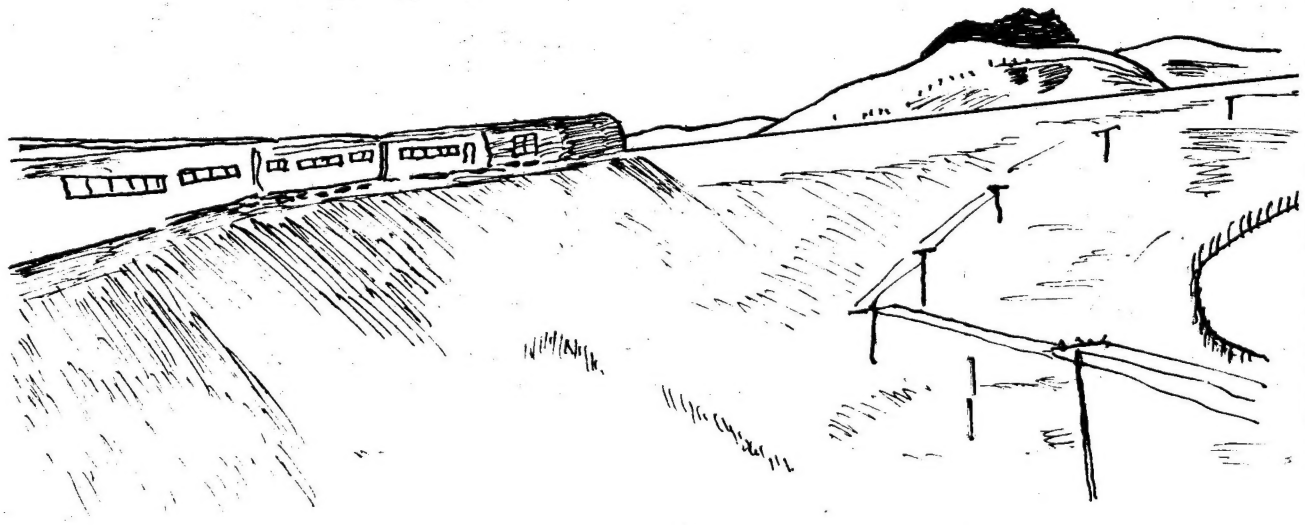
SCL Wants to Own L&N

The Seaboard Coast Line will attempt to take over ownership of Louisville & Nashville; it now owns a third of its stock. It won't seek a formal merger, fearing a blockade by the ICC.

Needed—A Canada to Mexico Express —plan for a West Coast through sleeper

An international train for the West Coast of the United States! What a joy to travel from Canada to Mexico, from Mexico to Canada, snug in your own sleeping compartment, breakfast in bed if you wish, punctuated by trips to the dome car to revel in the fantastic scenery, luxuriously watching the hours slip by as you relax in the plush club car chair. No gray highway to rivet your attention, you look or not as you please while the mountains and the valleys and the sea glide by outside your window. You see Puget Sound, the Cascades of Washington and Oregon, the lush Willamette Valley, Mount Shasta, the wide Sacramento Valley, San Francisco Bay, the flower-sprinkled Salinas Valley, the picturesque Santa Lucia range, miles of Pacific seacoast where the highway doesn't touch and ranches roll down to the water. You watch the landscape change from Northern to Central to Southern ocean, the firs give way to palms and poinsettias. You move through snow, green meadows, massed wildflowers, mountains and hills, endless beaches. Finally you are at the Mexican border and you change trains to go on to Baja, Guadalajara, Mexico City, Veracruz or scores of tiny Mexican towns. Going north, you detrain at Vancouver and change to Canadian National or Canadian Pacific to head for the Rockies and Eastern Canada, or you strike out for northern B. C. on the Pacific Great Eastern. The entire trip from Vancouver to Mexicali takes 37½ hours--just one night and most of two days, with no change of trains. You have stopover privileges at any point along the line--Klamath Falls, San Francisco, Santa Barbara--over a dozen major Western tourist spots.

Is it all a dream, this fanciful train? The tantalizing fact is that it's so very possible but getting less likely each day. All it needs to make it real is some people to



↓ SCHEDULE ↑		
DAILY (Ex)	STATIONS	DAILY (Ex)
10:00 Sun	Vancouver	7:00 Mon
1:00	Seattle	4:00
4:30	Portland	12:30 Mon
	Salem	
	Eugene	
	Klamath Falls	
	Redding	
	Sacramento	
9:00 Mon	Oakland	8:00
	San Jose	
	San Luis Ob.	
	Santa Barbara	
5:45	Los Angeles	11:15
8:30	San Diego	7:30
11:30 Mon	Mexicali	5:30 Sun

want it enough. At the present there is passenger service over the entire route except a 3-hour stretch between San Diego and Calexico (Mexicali) on the Mexican border. But 4 different railroads run the trains, and you must take 5 trains with unmeshed schedules, plus 2 buses, to make the 1-way trip. The shortest total time is now 73 3/4 hours southbound and 80 hours northbound and two 1-night layovers must be made each way. Also, service on the S.F.-Portland segment is only tri-weekly.

For the first time in history, a through train on this route is feasible. With the semi-public Railpax corporation soon to run the trains, and sufficient population and travel interest to furnish traffic, the run could be a boon to the traveller and vacationer as well as a stimulant to interstate commerce and U.S. prestige, now thoroughly sagging in the area of rail travel. It could show the world that we can do something with verve as the European nations, Japan, and both Canada and Mexico are now doing.

To our knowledge no one has previously proposed such a train. But no time is better than now to do so. The proposed Railpax network is not really a network without north-south West Coast connections and a restored Sunset route in the Southwest. Travellers in the West could rather easily be given a novel and attractive alternative to air and asphalt with minimal changes in present scheduling. An entirely new run could be opened simply by combining existing piecemeal service and upgrading it. The running time is entirely realistic when compared with present schedules--perhaps it could be even shorter than we propose.

In our plan (see map on front cover) we keep the Sunset route, though not needed for an International Express. We also assume additional short-haul trains in the Seattle-Portland and L.A.-San Diego corridors. But the Canada-Mexico Express fills both a need and a dream--a need to improve the quality of modern life and return to the public some of the excitement of rail travel it has lost.

Dec.19. About 1000 motorists were rescued from a heavy snowstorm which stranded them for 24 hours on Interstate highway 5 in the Tehachapi Mts., on the major route between San Francisco and Los Angeles. The following day the highway remained closed and highway patrolmen pondered what to do with hundreds of abandoned cars.

COMMUTING AND RAPID TRANSIT

Malibu Resident Shuns Mass Transit

At least one Southern Californian does not agree that cars have proliferated in L.A. to the point that rapid public transit is a must. In a letter to Science Magazine (Nov.6) a far-out L.A. suburbanite wrote: "Frankly, I wouldn't use a streetcar if it ran right past my house. I don't like to stand and wait for them. And when it comes to comfort, privacy, speed, and package carrying ability, and overall convenience, there is no comparison between a streetcar and an automobile. Hanging a streetcar on a monorail and calling it rapid transit changes nothing." It is of course highly unlikely that a rapid transit car will ever run through Malibu. But the gentleman's criticisms must be taken seriously if transportation experts expect to understand why people are motivated to choose various modes of transport. One outstanding reason in L.A. must be that there is no other choice but the auto. Denying that cars create serious environmental problems (as the writer goes on to do) doesn't help remove them. Of course living in Malibu gets you as far from them as conveniently possible--at least until the urban sprawl catches up with you.

No Free Cable Cars for Conventioneers

The San Francisco Public Utilities Commission rejected a proposal by two large insurance companies to pay the entire costs of operating S.F.'s cable cars next Feb. 23 so that insurance management conventioneers could ride them free. Daily receipts on the cars average $5000 to $7000.

Museum Pieces in Paris Metro

Paris recently tried an innovation at its Louvre Metro stop. Reproductions of favous Louvre statues now stand on display at the refurbished subway stop, giving it an appearance rather like the museum itself.

QUOTES OF THE WEEK ***

"Among the major causes of the nation's transportation problems are the Government's piecemeal efforts in the area. For much too long Congress and the agencies have stumbled along without any clear view of the broad situation."

--Wall Street Journal editorial, Dec. 14

"There is an illusion, particularly prevalent among bureaucrats and businessmen who always take airplanes anyway, that the way to improve railroad passenger services is to cut off its hands and feet. In the name of efficiency and cost-cutting, lines are lopped off, the dining, parlor, and sleeping cars are eliminated, and schedules are trimmed. When the number of passengers then declines still further, these same 'experts' announce that the public just will not patronize the railroads.

These useless experts and this harmful illusion still prevail in the Department of Transportation. The network of passenger train routes made public by Secretary Volpe is patently defective."

--New York Times editorial, Dec. 6

"It would be ironic indeed if the move to improve rail passenger service nationwide should result in no service at all for Portland and several other cities not listed on the DOT network. We agree with the railroad men whose reactions we sought that this is inconceivable."

--Portland Oregonian editorial, Dec. 2

"Arrival at New York was just about on time, but I couldn't help feeling that the little three-car train was sneaking in between commuter trains from Stamford and White Plains, rather than proudly bursting in like a new concept in railroading should."

--Kevin McKinney reporting on the Turbo train, Passenger Train Journal, Fall 1970

EDITORIAL (Continued from page 2)

As Tom Wicker of the New York Times commented, the very meager beginning proposed by DOT does not augur well for its faith in Railpax or in passenger service. While the government will invest only $40 million directly in Railpax and $300 million in loans, the House has just voted $17.3 billion more to complete the Interstate Highway System, an investment "stupendously out of proportion to the low efficiency and poor cost-effectiveness" of the automobile.

A poor beginning is unlikely to stimulate good usage of the system by the public. As proposed, the "network" is actually something like a wheel with spokes but no rim. A better network requires connections along the West Coast and on the present Sunset route in the Southwest. Volpe's address is Dept. of Trans., 800 Independence Ave. S.W., Washington D.C. 20590.

HOW TO KILL A PASSENGER TRAIN No.2 of a series

Attack the safety factor. One of the strongest points brought up by train lovers is the safety record of the railroads. This can be subtly eroded by careful planning: Donate an old coach to the local blood bank, label it boldly BLOOD DONOR CAR and park it prominently where commuters will see it continually. The psychological association will gradually be built up. Another possibility: suppose you have a massive freight derailment on a passenger line, and sabotage is suspected. Post large notices on major station doors offering a reward for information. These will be constant reminders that passenger trains sometimes derail too. Keep them up for years if necessary.

Next issue (January 4): 1971--Year of the Train.

Coming early in 1971: A unique chronology of railroad events of 1970. You won't want to miss this unusual and informative feature--a useful reference guide you'll want to save.

HAPPY HOLIDAYS to all our readers from Rail Travel Newsletter, and happy railroading!